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Far East

FOUR FORCES in the *Far East*

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FOUR FORCES

IN THE FAR EAST

EVERYONE who follows the news has been startled at the events of the past few years in the Far East. We know that China has fallen to the Communists. We know that the government of Indonesia has shown great weakness. We know that the English government has been fighting to a draw in Malaya for years. But often we are not aware of many forces which have worked with each other or against each other to bring about these startling changes. In our travels throughout the Far East we have had opportunity to evaluate the power of these forces at close hand.

Communism

Without doubt the most dominant force in the Far East at this time is Communism. In some Far Eastern countries this force is opposed by other forces but in the land of China it would seem to be having its own way. And with what results? Living at Hong Kong as we did for several months, and having access to reliable sources of information from the interior, we were able to establish the truth concerning results of Communist domination in China.

Without exception all sources report the fact of China's extreme poverty. It is known that China always has been poor. But there have been some who could be called middle class and some, too, who certainly could be considered rich. Today, there are no rich and no middle class. The Communists have reduced everyone to a common level: the lowest.

Communism also appears to have succeeded in doing something which no one thought could

have been done—it has changed the very nature of the Chinese. Formerly Chinese young people were noted for their respect for their elders, particularly for their parents. There is every evidence now of a complete change in this regard. Communism places authority in the hands of the very young. A sixteen-year-old who shows qualities of leadership often becomes the dominant figure in a large organization. Children are encouraged to betray their parents if the parents reveal sympathy for Western ways and ideas. The betrayal often has led to the imprisonment or death of the parents.

There is still another evidence of change of character. The Chinese always have been fond of chatter. They talk from morning till night and sometimes from night till morning. But reports have it that China now has become profoundly silent. Chattering has ceased. All remarks are guarded lest the individual give himself away and be reported by disloyal friends or relatives.

In those areas farther removed from the Communistic centers there are many who follow the Communist illusion. Rosy stories of glory, of vast improvements in the government of interior China, of rising standards of living, etc., are making real impressions upon the young of Indonesia, Malaya, and India. But populations living close by are becoming disillusioned. On May Day, 1951, Communists managed to stage a real celebration in the city of Hong Kong. Buildings were draped with Communist flags, rousing speeches were made, and glowing reports appeared in the newspapers. Some thought that more than half of Hong Kong's population was pro-Communist. But May Day, 1952, was different. Fewer persons put out Communist flags. The rabid speeches failed to arouse any attention. Newspapers were adverse in their comments. One year of firsthand experience with near-by Communism had lessened its attractiveness to inhabitants of Hong Kong. Business in Hong

Kong today flourishes unrestricted, but the Communist government has forced out of business eighty per cent of Peking's businessmen during the past few years. Why? Because Communism is determined to bring all the people to one level.

Some have hoped that China soon would reopen its doors to the gospel. They have believed that in some way there would be a counter-revolution from within. But we have yet to see even one country shake itself loose where once Communism has fastened its tentacles.

Catholicism

In other countries of the Far East there are other strong forces at work. Catholicism must not be overlooked. One cannot understand the true nature of Catholicism until he visits a country where the Roman church is definitely in the saddle and where the larger portion of the population is Catholic. Come with me to the Philippines. Here the Roman Catholic church has ministered to the spiritual needs of the Filipinos (population 20,000,000). The Filipinos are a people of outstanding natural gifts, of brilliant minds, and of great physical strength. Their country is not overcrowded and there are abundant natural resources. Yet one does not need to be long in the Philippines before he notices the strange apathy, the don't-care attitude toward life, the downright laziness of many persons. Some thoughtlessly would blame this condition entirely to the tropical climate, but the Chinese who live in the Philippines reveal no such apathy; therefore, the true reason must be elsewhere.

Catholicism began its tyranny when it entered the Philippines 400 years ago and by means of forced labor built great cathedrals throughout the land. With none to oppose its sway it began domination of the Filipino people. Exorbitant fees were charged for clerical services at marriage, at death, etc. The very life blood of the people was sucked away through in-

Our Far East Field



cessant demands for money to enrich the coffers of the church.

Unable to pay the charges the young Filipino who contemplates marriage makes the simple decision just to live with the woman of his choice. As a result we find in the Philippines today great laxity along all moral lines.

Visit the cathedral of the Black Christ in Manila. Watch the worshiping multitudes as they come and go. Near the main entrance you will find the image of the Black Christ itself. There is scarcely a moment during the daylight hours when someone is not passing by it, rubbing the feet, kissing them, and applying the sores of his body against them. A plaster of paris arm and hand lies on the table in the main hall as you enter. Within it are supposed to be the bones of St. Thomas' hand. This gruesome hand and arm also are kissed and rubbed by the worshipers. The cathedral is full of such relics for veneration. Nothing can be more degrading to the spirit of man or more contrary to the express commands of Scripture than such idolatry.

Wherever Catholicism meets with the competitive force of Protestantism, however, it changes its tactics completely. Under the stimulus of competition it erects schools better than those of the Protestants, better hospitals, etc., but when this great force is left alone its overwhelming effect is to degrade and stupefy. The effect of its influence upon the lives and hearts of the people it dominates cannot be overestimated.

Commercialism

There is a third force at work in the Far East which often scarcely is recognized. But if all the facts were known it may be that the effect of this force upon the lives of men is the greatest in the world today. It is the force of commercialism. If you visit Hong Kong and have a reasonably good gift of analysis, it is not difficult to see what the force of com-

mercialism can do to a people. Here is a city built on profit at the expense of the public good. Its history begins with a trading company that was determined to gain wealth even if it had to enslave a whole nation with opium to do it. Hong Kong is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Its natural harbor of beautiful blue water, its abruptly rising softly green mountains, its streets throbbing with business and enterprise, all form a most attractive picture.

But commercialism in itself cannot uplift. Ask for the public library. No one knows where it is, for there isn't any. Ask for the city auditorium. There isn't any for commercialism has never been interested in advancing the cultural interests of the people. It is content only with building more and more banks and opening more and more shops for business. And with what results? Deep into the heart of every man there is produced a desire, an insatiable desire, for wealth and the worship of materialism. Death of the spirit results from commercialism, for no one has time for anything but the making of money.

Not only in Hong Kong, but throughout the length and breadth of the Far East the force of commercialism is at work. Men will sell their souls, their country, their honor, anything for more wealth.

Christianity

If there were but these three sinister forces at work in the Far East our heart would fail us. But there is another force in operation. It is Christianity. This force, too, is greatly underestimated. The ungodly like to taunt us with the fact that in some places only one person in one hundred is a Christian, in other places perhaps only one in a thousand. But Christianity is dynamite. Christian principles, put to work by someone who truly believes in them, are dynamite too.

A few years ago the people of Japan were discouraged and defeated. Their country was

devastated by war. Ninety per cent of the great cities were destroyed almost completely by bombing. But a great general who believed in Christian principles put the principles to work in the rehabilitation of Japan. Under the stimulus of this treatment the Japanese nation arose almost in a day to find itself anew. Today the whole country hums with activity, the people are happy, aggressive, well employed and it is difficult for the superficial observer to find traces of the ravages of war in the land.

The magnanimous peace treaty, sponsored by Mr. Foster Dulles, has also had a powerful effect upon the people of Japan. Mr. Dulles admits that the inspiration for the treaty came to him from the Sermon on the Mount.

It has been our opportunity to travel through the Far East from Korea, to Japan, to Formosa, to Hong Kong. We have traveled the length and breadth of the Philippines, the length of the Malay peninsula, and over much of Indonesia. There is no denying the amazing effect of one Christian, of one Protestant church, of one Christian testimony in the midst of the conflicting forces of evil in the Far East. Jesus calls it "the light shining in the darkness." "Be of good cheer," He says, "I have overcome."

Young people graduated from our Bible Institute in Manila have scattered over the Philippines to establish new and self-supporting churches. There is no apathy in these young lives, but enthusiasm and a burning desire to turn men to righteousness. In Hong Kong in 1952 the young people from Ecclesia Bible Institute conducted Vacation Bible Schools with a total attendance of 3,000 children. Many children were saved and will take the message of life back with them into heathen homes.

"I will build my church," says Jesus, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." One day He will come and will set up a kingdom, founded upon righteousness, which cannot be shaken. The missionary knows that he is in

touch with the greatest power there is and the church which he establishes is the greatest force in the world today.

Far East Summary

The following is a summary of our missionary activities in the Far East:

Communist China. Very sketchy news is available concerning our work in Communist China. We know that the Northwest District still functions, though severe persecutions and difficulties with the present government have done much to dishearten. No word has reached us for some time concerning the Bible School in Kunming and the one in Peking. We think they are continuing.

Fiji Islands. The population of the Fiji Islands is close to 300,000. Hindus from India comprise about half the population and they are almost entirely unevangelized. We have had work among them, however, for a number of years in the city of Suva. Several outstations are maintained for them. The Methodists are ministering among a native population of 100,000. Then there is a large section of the people which could be classified as mixed races. We have a thriving church in Suva for these peoples. An orphanage also has been established.

Formosa. We entered Formosa in 1948, establishing a work in the capital city of Taipei, among the islanders, descendants of Chinese

from Amoy, China. The growing work now demands the opening of outstations. In addition, missionaries recently have been sent to work among mainlanders who have fled to the island to escape Communist persecution. We are negotiating for ground to establish a Bible School to train workers for the ministry in Formosa.

Hong Kong. The picture in British Hong Kong is entirely different from that of Communist China. The great assembly on Nathan Road with its hundreds of members continues to thrive. Land has been purchased for a large new church and construction begun. There are outstations of the church. A fine Bible School is located in Sha Tin. The faculty numbers ten and the student body seventy-five:

Indonesia. The islands of the great republic of Indonesia stretch 4,000 miles from east to west. The Assemblies of God has work on the Islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi (Celebes), and Ambon. Work has begun in the Riouw Islands, which lie just south of Singapore, Malaya. Bible Schools have been established in Djakarta, Ambon, and Tomohon.

The population of Indonesia is 65,000,000, of which ninety-five per cent is Mohammedan. We have had some converts among the difficult-to-reach Moslems, but our most fruitful source has been the Chinese, indigenous to Indonesia. Sunday School work has been exceptionally successful in Djakarta. Close to 1,000 children attend our Sunday Schools in that city. Two gospel boats operate in Indonesia, the "MV. Evangel," and the "MV. Pengabar."

Japan. The national church has been organized in Japan. It is called, "The Assemblies of God in Japan." Canadian and American missionaries are associated with the organization. Offices are capably held by Japanese nationals. The Central Bible Institute of Japan is the source of supply for needed pastors of the expanding work. The present student body num-

bers more than forty. Our force of American missionaries has more than doubled in the last few years, as has also the number of national pastors and workers. An evangelistic center was opened a few weeks ago in a strategic location in the capital city of Tokyo. Funds for building the center were furnished by Christ's Ambassadors.

Korea. Independent Pentecostal missionaries labored in Korea for more than a decade. As a result of their noble efforts, the Pentecostal Korean church today numbers between 200 and 300. At the invitation of the church we recently entered Korea, and the last of 1953 we hope to open a Bible School there. A large volume of relief clothing and food has been going to our needy Christians in the war-stricken country. This has been a source of encouragement to the church.

Malaya. Larger quarters are needed both for the Chinese church and for the English-speaking congregation in Singapore. A splendid Chinese church has been established at Kuala Lumpur. Malaya needs a Bible School.

Philippine Islands. The work in the Philippines was begun by Filipinos converted in America. Our missionaries have strengthened the work and have aided in the establishment of Bible Schools. There is a strong Filipino organization, and close to eighty national churches throughout the Islands. Bethel Bible School, with a student body of seventy-five, is located near Manila. Immanuel Bible School, located on Leyte, is to be moved to Cebu City to train nationals of the Visayan Islands and the Island of Mindanao. Ground has been purchased for an evangelistic center in Manila, and construction has begun. It is expected that the center will be opened by the end of 1953. Manila has a population of 2,000,000. There are 7,083 islands in the Philippine group. Eighteen of the islands may be considered major. About 400 are inhabited.

Samoa. We carry on missionary work in American Samoa, population 10,000. British Samoa lies not far away with 80,000 more Samoans. These islands have had a formal type of Christianity for many years. There is little real salvation. We maintain two main churches and several outstations on the Island of Tutuila. A day school for Samoan children, and a Bible School also are conducted.

We now have 103 missionaries in the Far East fields. The missionaries are assisted by 251 national pastors. There are 241 churches and outstations and 11,954 baptized believers.

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